

Kimberly Rice
AFSCME, Local 714

S. B. 350 -AN ACT ESTABLISHING JUNETEENTH INDEPENDENCE DAY AS A LEGAL
HOLIDAY.

Government Administrative & Elections Committee

March 11, 2022

Good morning Co-Chairs Fox and Flexer and members of the Government Administrative & Election Committee. My name is Kimberly Rice. I am here in support of bill 350, Juneteenth Day as a legal holiday.

I am here to testify in support of Juneteenth as a legal holiday for the State of Connecticut. Juneteenth has been celebrated for decades by the American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS) community. I want to begin by stating black pain is real. America has yet to atone for its sins of slavery. Slavery, especially chattel slavery, was a barbaric system that included the mass kidnapping, murder, rape, and the buying and selling of black bodies that led to the destruction of black families. All of America's wealth and opportunities came from slavery. All of America has benefited from the immense wealth the slaves created except the ADOS community. MLK said, "Now our struggle is for genuine equality, which means economic equality," The ADOS community deserves more than a holiday; however, I must acknowledge making Juneteenth a holiday is a step in the right direction. Ultimately, we should be financially compensated in order to properly celebrate our freedom. The great Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

Again, I say black pain is real!

I support Juneteenth as a holiday and believe it to be a beautiful thought; however, it does little to address the oppression the ADOS community currently endures. Although it celebrates the historic date the slaves were freed. It also shines a light on the harsh reality the ADOS community still endures and our various experiences.

Frederick Douglas said, "The life of the nation is secure only while the nation is honest, truthful, and virtuous.

And finally he asked the question, "what is the fourth of July to the slave?" I ask what is Juneteenth to America? Will it ultimately become a date of healing and reconciliation or a constant reminder of our struggle?

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this historic bill..